

WELLS COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
July 12, 2021

Board members present:

Mike Mossburg
Leon Berning
Jon Oman
Bruce Stinson
Andy Stoller

L.A. Brown, RSD Superintendent
Nate Rumschlag, County Engineer
Ryan Lefeld, Choice One Engineering

Call to Order

Mike called the meeting to order with the pledge and prayer by Andy.

Approval of Minutes

Board reviewed the minutes as presented and Leon made some revisions to the minutes from June 14th meeting. Motion by Andy to approve the minutes as corrected, 2nd by Jon. Motion carried 5-0.

Review of Claims and Account Reconciliation

Review of claims prepared by Trent and reviewed by Leon for the board. Trent's report totals balance of district's claims for \$11,135.97. Motion to approve the claims by Bruce and 2nd by Jon. Motion carried 5-0.

Superintendent Report

LA commented that one person was questioning him about paying the \$35 per month.

LA asked the board if legal council will write up a lien policy that he can read from when interacting with the public.

LA asked the board about the smart phone and about possible number changes through Adams-Wells Internet. When calling out the number does not appear as the public expects in their caller ID so they ignore call backs. Adams Wells and LA are working on an option to change the Verizon number to help reduce this.

The sale of some properties is causing some confusion, but he is working with Carla to stay ahead of this.

Some customers have overpaid assuming late fees were the actual bill so now have some credit on their account. LA asked the board, since the billing company does not issue refunds under \$5, how they would like to handle this. Board directed LA to let the surplus to roll over and ask the billing company to credit the following month's invoice for the affected customers.

Engineering Reports

Aaron with VTF is looking to start this week after weeks of delays. Mike offered to call and ask when the start is to happen to address customer's complaints.

Ryan said they are looking at utility locates currently in the project areas before digging will start.

Craigville, Tocsin and Kingsland topographic and property surveys are underway. Kingsland should be this week and are nearly complete.

Gas company has been working on locates for the district on the Tocsin and Kingsland projects.

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Ryan presented that Wells and Bluffton ranked #1 & #2 in the latest project priority list per IFA's announcement. It is clear that the regionalization plan is working for both of us.

The SWIF grant application is due soon and needs tweaked and Nate is reviewing for Ryan prior to the application. This is due July 15th. Next 2 weeks we expect we should have status of the funding.

Choice One is working with property owners on pump stations.

Andy asked about route for Craigville and if this would be down Dustman Rd (CR 100N) to old SR 301 or not.

Ryan responded that yes that is the preferred route.

Andy then thanked Nate and Ryan for the work toward the #1 ranking again with Indiana Finance Authority for Small systems.

Future Projects – Public Hearings

Nate reviewed options for the future project public hearings. Ryan recommended that we attempt to split the project areas since the project areas have such different schedules, outfall locations and construction.

After discussion the board asked Nate to schedule hearings for August 16, 18 and 19 as the target and to see what venues will allow for those dates.

Motion by Jon and 2nd by Bruce to proceed with the hearings as proposed and subject to venue availability. Motion approved 5-0.

Attorney Comments

Mark was on vacation this month and was not available for comments.

Board Comments

The Powell excavating bill for the ditch work should be in the project since it was part of the easement agreement with the property owner. Ryan recommended that this could be done at any time.

Public Comments

Unidentified – How is it lawful to charge for service that is not provided?

Mike – we have pipe and debt that needs to be paid for.

Andy – the final bill has 3 components to the bill. The sewage is zero now, but some of the operating costs and the debt service needs to be prepared for since we have interest payments that will be due.

Unidentified – What does the \$35 per month go to?

Unidentified – We don't get notifications to keep people informed.

Unidentified – The notifications should come directly to us.

Andy – asked about internet access and if they have visited the district website.

Unidentified – What is the service here? Why are you so condescending?

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Unidentified – This service is something that the people did not ask for. We don't want this.

Unidentified – When is work starting and when are you making us connect?

Unidentified – We have asked for ordinances and did not have the ordinances given to us.

Unidentified – We have a septic tank under our garage and why does she have to tear her garage down to connect to this project?

LA Brown – No, that is not the case, and we are not telling you to tear down your garage. There will be some way to get the tank emptied and a tap done even with your tank in such a place. The cost for work to the tap will be the property owners.

Unidentified – My sewer on your plan circles the property, why can't I tap where my line leaves my property?

Ryan asked for residence location, and he would be happy to look at changing the tap location since resident knows where the tap leaves the house.

Unidentified – Why does a family of 2 pay the same as a family of 5?

Ryan – metering residential sewer is not feasible or cost effective for the district. In regard to why the district charges an interim rate, the district is mandated to do so by the state as a condition of the funding to show our ability to repay the debt so it's not an election by the board but a mandate of the funding agency.

Unidentified – Why would you put liens on residents?

Nate – The lien is simply the way the district is allowed to keep people from skipping out and leaving debt for those residents that are paying their bill. It's not unlike how habitual "dine and dash" would cause a restaurant to raise the tab for those that do pay their bills.

Unidentified – We as a county asked for this grant to deal with the sewage problems in our area. This is put up and needs to be paid to make us eligible for a subsidized rate.

Leon – the \$35/month was connected to the grant and without that the bills would be over \$200/month without SRF support.

Jon commented that the City is working on the River Terrace area, but since the funding is coming from other sources the City is not currently charging interim rates.

Leon – Uniondale and Poneto charge customers similar rates with a similar rate structure.

Andy – Options are not there, and septic failure provided him no options.

Unidentified – How will this affect property taxes?

Nate – these two would not be directly tied together. The investment of the district does not count toward your property value since it is the district's property for those in the project, but that your property will have sewer

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access could be viewed positively in future appraisals. That would be a question for the county assessor when your property is up for re-appraisal.

Unidentified – When will this start or stop?

Board – the rate ordinance should have a 90-day connection notice.

Unidentified – If they cut a tile a tile will they repair it?

Ryan – yes that is required in the contract. If you are aware of tiles, it would be helpful to identify and avoid.

Shane – I live in Tocsin and from what I understand, I will be close enough to that system to choose to connect if I can. It seems like tonight there is an issue with communication.

Mike – The previous communication director firm stunk, and they were terminated at the last meeting. The district is in evolution and the project with Tocsin will be better for us.

Unidentified – Maybe mailings can go out to the residents?

LA – As the superintendent for the homes in the area, timing forces us to hurry. I will be putting notices on the back of bills each month to help get info out to the public.

The district website should have updated records for the public to review. www.wellsrsd.com

Darrel Lambert – why are the minutes only up through May?

Nate – the district approves the minutes from the last meeting during the current meeting. So tonight's meeting the board approved the minutes from the June meeting so in the next day or so I will scan and send those over to be posted on the website. This is common if you compare these records with other county or local government websites.

Unidentified – Can we fill the tank with foam?

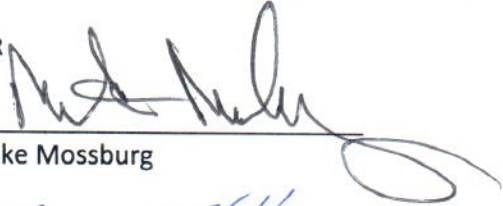
LA – I would recommend use of flowable fill or low strength concrete which could fill the void.

Motion to adjourn – Leon, motion 2nd by Bruce. Meeting adjourned. 5-0

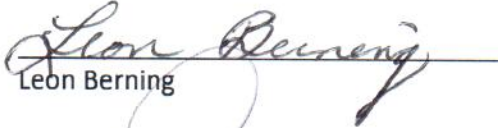
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Next meeting is a regularly scheduled meeting for August 9th at the regular time.

NR



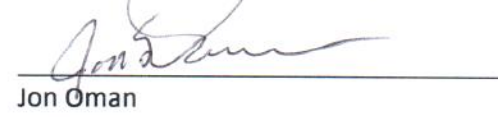
Mike Mossburg



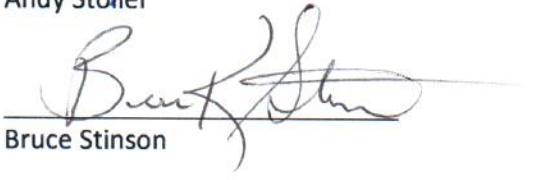
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